

REMARKS

This Amendment accompanies a Request for Continued Examination (RCE).

In the final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,046,298 to Schroeder, Jr. (hereinafter "Schroeder"); rejected claims 8-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,216,739 to Hill et al. in view of Schroeder; and rejected claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,272,886 to Novack et al. in view of Schroeder.

Applicant has amended claims 1, 8 and 15. Claims 1-15 are pending in the above-captioned patent application.

At the outset, Applicant respectfully notes that claims 1, 8 and 15, as amended, recite first and second supports that secure first and second portions of a fiber optic cable, respectively. The second support has a curved portion, and a radius associated with the curved portion exceeds a minimum bend radius of the fiber optic cable. Support for the changes to claims 1, 8 and 15 may be found, for example, in the specification at page 7, lines 12-17, which describe fiber cable support 22 having a grooved curved portion 34. As further described in the specification, "the radius of curvature of grooved curved portion 34 is also greater than the minimum bend radius of cable 100."

Specification at page 7, lines 13-14.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Schroeder. Amended claim 1, for example, is not anticipated by Schroeder because the reference fails to teach each and every element of the claim. In particular, Schroeder at least fails to teach the claimed combination including a second support having a curved portion, and a radius associated with the curved portion exceeding a minimum bend radius of a fiber optic cable.

Apparently, the Examiner contends that stripping wheel 24 corresponds to the claimed second support. According to Schroeder, the radius of curvature of the stripping wheel is 5 cm, *"which resulted in clean fiber fractures"* (Emphasis added. Col. 6, lines 56-57). Thus, the radius of wheel 24 is apparently less than the bending radius of fibers 10b so that the fibers may be broken. In contrast, Applicants invention preserves the continuity of fibers because the fibers are attached to a support having a radius that exceeds the minimum bend radius of the fiber. Accordingly, by disclosing a relatively small wheel radius to facilitate fiber breakage, Schroeder teaches away from the claimed combination including a second support having a curved portion, and a radius associated with the curved portion exceeding a minimum bend radius of a fiber optic cable, as recited in amended claim 1.

Claim 1 is therefore allowable over Schroeder and claims 2-7 are allowable at least due to their dependence from claim 1.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 8-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Hill et al. in view of Schroeder. Claim 5 is similar to claim 1 in that it recites a second support having a curved portion. The curved portion has an associated radius that exceeds a minimum bend radius. The method recited in claim 5 requires a step of securing an end of a fiber optic cable to the second support.

Hill et al. discloses an end of a fiber 3 being attached to a weight 5. Claim 8 requires that a fiber be attached or secured to a support, which the Examiner apparently contends corresponds to pulley 6. However, fiber 3 of Hill et al. is not secured to pulley 6, but is "passed over" it (col. 3, lines 47-49). Thus, pulley 6 cannot correspond to the claimed second support at least for this reason. Moreover, although pulley 6 is disclosed having a radius of 8.2 centimeters (col. 3, lines 43-49), it is unclear whether pulley 6 has a radius that exceeds a minimum bend radius without further information concerning the dimensions of fiber 3.

Thus, Applicants submit that pulley 6 cannot correspond to the claimed second support for this reason as well.

As noted above, Schroeder also fails to teach the claimed second support. Thus, since neither Hill et al. nor Schroeder teaches or suggests the claimed method including a step of

securing a portion of a fiber optic cable to a second support having a curved portion with a radius exceeding a bend radius of the fiber optic cable, Applicants submit that claim 8 is allowable over both Hill et al. and Schroeder. In addition, claims 9-14 are allowable at least due to their dependence from claim 8.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Novack et al. in view of Schroeder. Amended claim 15 recites a method for calibrating a fiber optic cable tensioning and positioning apparatus having first and second supports. Like claims 1 and 7, claim 15 recites a second support with a curved portion having an associated radius that exceeds a minimum bend radius.

Novack et al. discloses clamps 26 and 28 for gripping a fiber 12 (col. 8, line 67 - col. 9, line 1). Neither clamp 26 nor clamp 28 has a curved portion and therefore neither corresponds to the claimed second support. Moreover, as discussed in detail above, Schroeder also fails to teach or suggest the claimed second support. Accordingly, since neither reference can overcome the deficiencies of the other, Applicants submit claim 15 is allowable over the Examiner's proposed combination of references.

In light of the foregoing amendment and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reexamination and reconsideration of the

above-identified application and a timely allowance of the pending claims.

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Respectfully submitted,

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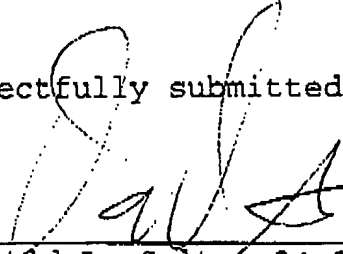
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